OTF/FEO Interaction . . . on line

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A Message from the President

Barbara Sargent

Dear Fellow Teachers:

We are now well into the work of our schools. As we are on the verge of our Thanksgiving celebrations and the marking of World Teachers' Day, we should pause to remember those things for which we can be grateful.

In looking at my daily newspaper over the last few weeks, there are some stories that deserve our attention.

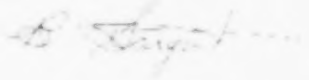
- Maggie Greenwood, principal of Shoreham Public School in Toronto and the teachers and staff acted with professional and concerned speed in ensuring the safety of the children in their school when a man with a gunshot wound stumbled into the school yard at recess.
- The amazing work of the teachers and staff at West Hill Elementary School in suburban Toronto. About 30% of the students at this school every year are homeless. These dedicated professionals have made their school a warm and welcoming learning environment.
- Mary Lou Sicoly, George Brasovan and Allan Molnar of Dante Alighieri Academy in North York were recognized for their teaching excellence in the Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching.
- Teacher of the Year Awards were given by TVOntario to Judith Sincennes-Guertin of École Saint-Hugues in Sarsfield, Paul Delaney of Victoria Harbour Elementary School in Victoria Harbour, and Dave Noble of Campbellford District High School in Campbellford for their work in their schools. These three excellent teachers represent all parts of our publicly funded school system in Ontario - elementary and secondary, public and Catholic, English and French. What is common among the three, is that their work reaches beyond their classrooms into the community. Their work places education at the heart of their communities.
- Over 4,400 teachers attended Summer Curriculum Institutes to prepare for the new school term.

These are just the stories that make the news. But I know that there are stories in every school in Ontario that deserve to be celebrated - thousands of three- four- and five-year-olds were welcomed to their first school experience by caring teachers. Thousands of teenagers graduated from high school and were sent off on new educational adventures by excited teachers. Students mastered long division, understood the process of photosynthesis, played on the school basketball team, and learned to tie their shoelaces.

All of these teaching tasks - large and small are causes for celebration.

I encourage you to take the time on October 5 - World Teachers' Day and on Thanksgiving to celebrate your achievements. Celebrate the successes of your students whatever they may be.

Sincerely,



Barbara Sargent
President

The OTF Executive met for the first time in the 1999-2000 school year. Some of the business discussed included:

Teacher Education

The Executive reviewed and approved the formal response from OTF to the College of Teachers consultation on a learning framework. The Ontario Teachers' Federation response to the *Consultation: Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession - April 1999* is available as a pdf document. You will need a free Acrobat Reader to view this document.

The Executive also continued its discussions on teacher testing and mandatory professional development. The Teacher Education and College of Teachers work groups are continuing their work on these issues.

College of Teachers

The Executive received an interim report on the upcoming election to the Governing Council of the Ontario College of Teachers.

The Minister of Education has not yet announced her intentions on the timing of the elections. In the last edition of Interaction *on line*, Volume 2, No. 1, we outlined the issues of the timing and asked you to write to the Minister.

Strategic Framework

The Executive approved continuing with the Community Forums. You will need a free Acrobat Reader to view this document. Plans are being made for holding forums in Barrie, Sudbury and Metro Toronto. Some of the planners of the first round of forums are planning follow-up activities. If you are interested in holding a community forum in your community, contact Ruth Baumann at ruth.baumann@otffeo.on.ca.

The Executive also asked for a more detailed plan for moving the Strategic Plan forward during this school year. The report will be made to the October Executive Meeting.

Teacher in Space

The Executive agreed to send to CTF a request to contact the Canadian Space Agency about supporting a Teacher in Space Program.

Youth News Network (YNN)

The Executive discussed a report from the Canadian Teachers' Federation on the intrusion into our schools by the commercial YNN.

YNN is a for-profit company that offers schools technology infrastructure in return for a five-year contract that would allow the broadcast of a YNN produced twelve and a half minute 'news' program to all of the students in a school-no exceptions. The program contains two and a half minutes of government or corporate commercials. OTF and the Affiliates and the other members of the Canadian Teachers' Federation have opposed this company being given this kind of access to our students. Last year the Executive sent a Communiqué to teachers encouraging them to inform school administrators and school boards that we oppose this proposal.

You can get more information about YNN at the following websites:

Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF)
http://www.ctf-fce.ca

Media Awareness Network
http://www.media-awareness.ca

Canadian Association of Media Education Organizations (CAMEO)
http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/CAMEO/ynn/index.html

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)
http://www.policyalternatives.ca

Youth News Network (YNN)
http://www.ynn.ca

World Teachers' Day

In October 1994, at the 44th Session of the International Conference on Education in Geneva, UNESCO declared October 5 as World Teachers' Day. It was also recommended that this be an annual event. The date is the anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 Recommendation on the Status of Teachers.

The United Nations agency has designated a World Teachers' Day to recognize the work and the role played by teachers.

As the professional body representing 144,000 teachers in the publicly funded schools of Ontario, we are mandated by statute:

a. To promote and advance the cause of public education;
b. To raise the status of the teaching profession;
c. To promote and advance the interests of teachers and to secure conditions that will make possible the best professional service;
d. To arouse and increase public interest in educational affairs; and
e. To co-operate with other teachers' organizations throughout the world having the same or like objectives.

The President of OTF has written to the Premier of Ontario and to the Minister of Education requesting that the Government declare October 5 as World Teachers' Day in Ontario.

I encourage you to mark World Teachers' Day in your own way. Let the OTF President, Barbara Sargent, (otfprez@otffeo.on.ca) know how you and your colleagues celebrated World Teachers' Day.

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